

## CLAIMS

- 5 1. A method in which search items returned in response to a present user's present search request are prioritized according to an algorithm which assigns greater weight to interest indications by relatively similar users making relatively similar search requests than to interest indications by relatively dissimilar users and than to interest indications making relatively dissimilar search requests.
2. A method as recited in Claim 1 comprising the steps of:  
receiving a search request from a user;  
assigning said user to a community;  
assigning said search request to a search query;  
5 submitting said query so as to yield a set of response items; and  
prioritizing said response items as a function of prior search requests by said community.
3. A method as recited in Claim 2 further comprising tracking indications of interest by said user in individual ones of said response items and storing the results of said tracking on a per user and/or per-community basis.
4. A method as recited in Claim 3 further comprising a step of using said results in prioritizing items collected in response to subsequent search requests by other users assigned to said community.
5. A method as recited in Claim 3 wherein, all else being equal, interest indications associated with a community are given greater weight than other interest indications by the parent of said community.

6. A method as recited in Claim 3 wherein said user is assigned to a community in part as a function of said indications of interest.

7. A method as recited in Claim 2 wherein said user is assigned to a community as a function of a selection of said community by said user.

8. A method as recited in Claim 2 wherein said user is assigned to a community as a function of a profile of said user existing before said search request is made.

9. A system comprising:

a search-request receiver for receiving a search request from a user;

a community assigner for assigning said user to a community;

5 a search-request parser for assigning said search request to a query;

a search engine for collecting search items in response to said query; and

10 a prioritizer for prioritizing said search items as a function of previous searches by said community.

10. A system as recited in Claim 9 further comprising a tracker for tracking indications of interest by a user in search items collected in response to said search request from said user, said prioritizer using said indications of interest to determine said  
5 function for future queries.

11. A system as recited in Claim 10 wherein said community assigner assigns said user to a community for said future search requests at least in part as a function of said indications of interest.

12. A database comprising:  
a key field identifying hit counts;  
a second field indicating a values for respective hit counts;  
a query context field indicating query contexts for respective hit  
5 counts; and  
a user and/or a community field indicating respective users  
and/or communities associated with said hit counts.

13. A database as recited in Claim 12 further comprising a  
decay field for indicating times associated with said hit counts.

14. A database as recited in Claim 12 further comprising of a  
period update system to update the community record counts from  
the user record counts.